

Harley Harrington, Long Resident Grinnell, Dies

H-R 10-3-55
Harley Harrington, well known Grinnell citizen, died at local hospital this morning (Monday) of age last July.

Harrington had been hospitalized for some time during the summer at the veterans' hospital in Des Moines, but had returned to Grinnell for finalization later. His last illness was a complication of dis-

ease. He was born in Grinnell July 7, 1893, son of Harry Harrington and Eunice Harrington, both long deceased.

Harrington was a veteran of World War I, having been discharged from the U. S. army at Camp Dodge, near Des Moines, in May, 1919, after serving overseas.

Funeral services will be Wednesday at 2 p. m. at Smith's home in charge of Rev. Kingsley. Burial will be in Wood cemetery.

GRINNELL, IOWA, HERALD-REGISTER

The Old Timer

H-R 10-10-55

It has been born in upon the Oldtimer that the death of Harley Harrington a few days ago should not be allowed to pass without a word of tribute, because Harley, for many years, was by way of being an institution in Grinnell. He belonged in the same category with Mumford, the former slave who contributed his own peculiar flavor to the life of the community.

The Oldtimer first met Harley when he came to Grinnell college as a freshman, too many years ago. At that time Harley was the town's baggageman. He met the trains with his decrepit wagon and transported the students' trunks to the college. In those days the students had trunks, and they were transported by train. It's all different now in this day of the automobile.

In that way Harley built up an extensive acquaintance in the student body. They all knew him and he knew them. He was a tall, gangling individual of great physical strength who juggled a trunk as though it were a ping pong ball. He was not dressed in the latest style and perhaps he didn't take a bath any too often, but he exuded a scent of genuine friendliness instead of one of perfume and he became one of the most popular citizens of Grinnell among the college population.

An instance of his hold on the people is told regarding a visit to Grinnell of Harry Hopkins, during Harry's days as intimate and counsellor of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. At that time Harry was staging a sort of unofficial presidential boom for himself and it was on this visit that he acquired or took an option on or somehow got hold of the H. W. Spauling farm on No 146 north of town, the same farm where the late Charley Cessna lived for so long.

News of the forthcoming arrival got around and a large reception committee of Democratic big wigs and dignitaries was at the station when the train pulled in, but no Harry appeared. Discomfited, the committee trailed up the platform, to discover the missing guest, who had hopped off the smoker and was in happy conversation with his good friend Harley Harrington.

For a good many years Harley operated his dray line in Grinnell. His horses were always among the boniest and his wagons among the most decrepit in the community, but he held his business by sheer force of his friendly personality.

He also made quite a point of moving heavy articles like safes. He was so strong that the heaviest safe was a plaything to him. In fact, the Oldtimer told him once that all he had to do was a walk up to a safe, pick it up and carry it out all by himself. As a matter of fact, he did have a helper or two for the heavier jobs.

Then came the automotive age and Harley exchanged his team and wagon for a car and then a taxi. That taxi was one of the world's curios. It might have served as a prototype for the little old Ford that rambled right along. "When your carburetor sticks, just hit it with a brick." It was that kind of a car.

They tell an incident from the taxi days. It appears that a customer called for the taxi and when Harley drove up with a flourish the customer

started to open the door, which came off in his hand. Doubtless Harley put it back with a little baling wire and went merrily on his way.

Probably the most glorious experience of Harley's lifelong residence in Grinnell came at the time of Grinnell's seventy-fifth anniversary celebration, when a historical pageant written by Bob Kerr was presented with much eclat by a cast of a hundred or more Grinnellians. The Oldtimer was in it as one of a group of citizens welcoming the first railway to Grinnell.

One of the scenes was laid in one of the illicit saloons which operated in the outskirts of Grinnell in those early days when the stern decree of J. B. Grinnell barred all intoxicating liquor from the town proper.

The script called for a bartender and the choice fell on Harley. There could not have been a better one. Harley was in his glory. Attired in a flannel shirt of flaming red, he played his part with an intensity which Booth or McCready might well have envied. The Oldtimer doesn't know, for sure, but he wouldn't be surprised if that stage appearance wasn't the high point of Harley's life.

Came World War I and Harley went to war. The Oldtimer doesn't know about his wartime experience, but when he returned he wasn't the same. Age was catching up with Harley. He made frequent trips to the Veterans Hospital in Des Moines. Then his house burned down and once more the community manifested its esteem. By popular subscription enough money was raised for a little house to shelter Harley during the last days of his life when he wasn't in the hospital.

Even though the strength had left his powerful frame he tried to carry on. He was always cheerful and always hopeful. Now that he is gone Grinnell will not be the same to those who knew him in his friendly prime.

Every town has its character. Grinnell has had several, but among them Harley Harrington was not the least.